1: Glacken E-5 (1951-1952) 1953 AC7 Okinawa AC7

Obtaining News of a Larger World

203

While it is an error to think of villages as isolated social and economic units, it would be a mistake also to fail to mention the existing obstacles to communication and the dissemination of news.

207

There are virtually no radio sets in any of these villages, except in the schools and sometimes in a village office. Home radio sets invariably need repairs. In Hanashiro, which has no electricity, there were 3 radios, two of which did not work. There were 4 in Hinatogawa, with one at least not working, and six in Matsuda, three of which were in the primary school, one in the village office. In these villages there is electricity from about 6:30 to 10:30 in the winter and from 7 to 11 PM in the summer. The radio is not an important direct medium for obtaining news. If they can, villagers tune in Japanese stations for news, music, and entertainment. There is a need for simple and cheap means of reaching rural areas by radio.

204

Newspapers are more important media. But in late 1951 and early 1952, there were 5 newspaper subscribers in Hanashiro, one going to the village office where it could be read by all, 14 in Hinatogawa, and about 20 in Matsuda, reduced from a previous 40 by an increase in the subscription rate. The barbershop in Matsuda had a newspaper. Schools and the township and village offices subscribe. It is difficult to estimate actual circulation. My own observation is that newspaper reading under these conditions is casual and intermittent, that newspapers are read consistently only by the village officials, school teachers, and the regular subscribers. News from Naha, the other Ryukyu islands, and from international sources is disseminated largely by word of mouth. Local readers make their reading a subject of conversation. There is no lack of interest in broader questions and in international events. The negotiations leading up to the Japanese peace treaty were followed with great interest by many villagers in Matsuda. [203]

Japanese magazines, particularly movie magazines, are popular despite their high cost. They are widely read not only by the young, but by older men and women, including school teachers.

206 ●

Telephones are not a part of home life. There were two privately installed field telephones in Hinatogawa, but no private telephones in the other villages. The village office, the post office are equipped with phones.

484 [494]

The possibilities of obtaining more direct knowledge of other parts of Okinawa Island have increased since the war. One can travel by public transportation from the southern part of the island to the extreme north in a reasonable time and not too uncomfortably. Provincial attitudes still remain. Persons in the southern villages

132 however, shows much less variation. From the low 50's in early winter it rises to the low 80's in midsummer. The relative humidities, having daily means of 70% in January and February and 82% in July and August, may often reach an uncomfortable 96% preceding or following one of the many rain squalls in the hot season.

From January through March, winds blowing from the northwest to north carry cold, damp air from the Asian continent across the East China Sea. Although many houses in Taira are somewhat protected by bushes separating them from the open valley behind, nevertheless, house doors are often kept shut during this coldest part of the year.

March and April offer a pleasant, balanced climate. Winds are east to southeast, rainfall is low, and temperatures reach the high 60's. The rainy season begins in late May and lasts until late June. During these [964] four weeks it sometimes rains steadily for one or two days, and adults are forced to give up working.

Children take shelter during the worst downpours, but they reappear outside even before the rains are over to play in puddles or little streams running down the streets. During this time floods and landslides occur.

Midsummer is often so hot and humid that villagers frequently comment on their discomfort. This is one of the busiest agricultural seasons, but exhaustion causes many people to take naps during noon [961] [513] hours. Work efficiency decreases, and fewer daily trips are made to the mountains. Children also stay at home in the afternoon. It is believed that the heat causes severe headaches. The hot season gradually gives way to a few weeks in late October, November, and early December which correspond in climate to an early fall in northeastern United States.

132 Typhoons are known to have hit Okinawa at almost any time of 731 the year. The most dangerous season for these violent storms, however, with wind velocities of over 50 miles per hour, is from late June until October. An extensive warning system exists, and Taira, though [206] remote and without radio, is notified immediately by telephone of storm warnings, sometimes days in advance. Taira people hardly need such warnings. They can sense the oncoming storm and often predict one correctly before the official forecasts confirm that a storm is approaching the island. Since 1955 was one of the rare years in which no major storm hit the island, no firsthand description can be given. The damage is always considerable, not only to crops and trees but also to houses and other property.

623 attend." As on all occasions women usually sit together on one side or in the rear. Few of them participate during discussions. The most active spokesmen for the women are the head of the Women's Association and one or two of her close assistants. If a discussion concerns such matters as liquor and food for celebrating certain holidays, a woman may speak [854] up. Mothers bring their infants along and hold them in their arms or nurse them when they get restless. Sometimes a child feels uncomfortable and starts crying, and the mother is forced to leave the room.

554 157 621 In general, Taira people do not enjoy being leaders or playing a dominating role. There are no bosses who attempt to force issues or dictate policies. Even people who have definite ideas on how to effect changes would not attempt to assume full responsibility by disregarding the advice of others. "Power" is not associated with responsible positions and village leadership. The headman and clerk perform a duty, often loathed by them and never too highly rewarded by others. A man commands respect for his education, age, sound advice, and exemplary behavior, not for the office he holds. Moreover, all villagers are friendly neighbors, and the man who is presently headman still [632] remains a relative or neighbor to everybody. There is more prestige associated with township offices. The mayor, who holds the highest position, is a man of age and experience; he commands a great deal of respect and has been elected to that office because of the high esteem in which he is held. Occasionally one hears of power hungry persons who are unscrupulous and authoritarian, but they are rare.

FORMAL CONTROL

625 Formal control of law and order is in the hands of the police. A detachment of the Hentona district police is located in the village, and one policeman is constantly stationed there. He lives with his family in [206] a building which also has a small office. Recently a telephone with direct connections to Hentona was installed. The policeman and his wife are from another township.

[166] The policeman's main duty, according to villagers, is to protect them from the occasional outside burglars or from fugitives from the south who come north to hide in the woods. The announcement that such a person is on the loose creates much excitement and anxiety. A [167] second important duty is the control of the shore line. Smugglers and illegal entrants from the Japanese island of Yoron, just to the north of Okinawa, land along the coast. Although one man with only a bicycle can hardly control effectively several miles of coastline, since the only road to the outer world leads through Taira, the policeman

1 [i.e. - to the household head meeting - ANALYST]